

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
WASHINGTON, DC 20423**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

STB Docket NO. AB-55 (Sub-No. 589X)

**CSX Transportation, Inc.--Abandonment Exemption--
in Logan County, WV**

BACKGROUND

In the above entitled proceeding, CSX Transportation, Inc.(CSXT) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152.50 seeking exemption from the requirements of 49 U.S.C. 10903 in connection with the abandonment of approximately 1.63-mile line of its railroad between milepost CMA 0.00 at Stollings and milepost CMA 1.63 at Fort Branch, in Logan County, WV. A map depicting the rail line in relationship to the area served is appended to the report. If the exemption becomes effective, the railroad will be able to salvage track, ties and other railroad appurtenances, and to dispose of the right-of-way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE LINE

The right-of-way is 30 feet wide from the centerline of track. In its application CSXT states that there has been no traffic on the line during the past two years.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

CSXT submitted an environmental report that concludes the quality of the human environment will not be affected significantly as a result of the abandonment or any post abandonment activities, including salvage and disposition of the right-of-way. UP served the environmental and historical reports on a number of appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies as required by the Surface Transportation Board's environmental rules [49 CFR 1105.7(b)]. Also we have consulted with appropriate agencies and individuals to verify the railroad's report and to obtain additional information and comments regarding the potential environmental effects of the proposed abandonment. Contacts have included the County Planning Commission; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3; Ms. Allyn Turner, Chief, Office of Water Resources, WV Division of Environmental Protection; U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Mr. Fred Cutlip, Director, Community Development Division; U.S. Department of Agriculture; National Geodetic Survey, National Park Service; and the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Department of Culture and History.

In a letter to UP dated April 23, 2001, the West Virginia Division of Culture and History (SHPO) states that before it can make a National Register eligibility determination of the right-of-way, it requires additional information about potentially resources on the line. SHPO also states that the material submitted for its review states that CSXT does not own any buildings or structures along the right-of-way that are fifty years old or older, but it is not clear if there are any railroad related resources owned by CSXT or not, located on the right-of-way.

The National Geodetic Survey has advised that four geodetic station markers have been identified that may be affected by the proposed abandonment.

CONDITIONS

We recommend the following environmental conditions be placed on any decision granting abandonment authority:

The West Virginia Division of Culture and History has not yet completed its determination of the historic significance of the right-of-way and requested additional information from CSXT. Therefore, we recommend that a condition be imposed requiring CSXT to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of the line in its entirety until completion of the section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 470(f).

The National Geodetic Survey (NGS) has identified four geodetic station markers that may be affected by the proposed abandonment. Therefore, CSXT shall notify NGS 90 days prior to salvage activities in order to plan their relocation.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided from all sources to date, we conclude that, as currently proposed, abandonment of the line will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the environmental impact statement process is unnecessary.

Alternatives to the proposed discontinuance would include denial (and, therefore no change in operations), discontinuance of service without abandonment, and continued operation by another operator. In this case, the existing quality of the human environment and energy consumption should not be affected.

PUBLIC USE

If abandonment and salvage of the rail line does not take place, the right-of-way may be suitable for other public use. A request containing the requisite four-part showing for imposition of a public use condition (49 CFR 1152.28) must be filed with the Board and served on the railroad within the time specified in the Federal Register notice.

TRAILS USE

A request for a notice of interim trail use (NITU) is due to the Board, with a copy to the railroad, within 10 days of publication of the notice of the petition for exemption in the Federal Register. However, the Board will accept late-filed requests as long as it retains jurisdiction to do so in a particular case. This request must comply with the Board's rules for use of rights-of-way as trails (49 CFR 1152.29).

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

The Board's Office of Public Services responds to questions regarding interim trail use, public use, and other reuse alternatives. You may contact the Office of Public Services directly at (202) 565-1592, or mail inquiries to Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K St., N.W., Office of Public Services, Washington, DC 20423.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS

If you wish to file comments regarding this environmental assessment, send an **original and two copies** to Surface Transportation Board, Vernon A. Williams, Office of the Secretary, 1925 K. St., N.W., Washington, DC 20423, to the attention of Ann Newman, who prepared this environmental assessment. **Please refer to Docket No. AB-55 (Sub-No. 589X) in all correspondence addressed to the Board.** If you have questions regarding this environmental assessment, you should contact Ann Newman at (202) 565-1629.

Date made available to the public: June 1, 2001.

Comment due date: June 15, 2001.

By the Surface Transportation Board, Victoria Rutson, Acting Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Attachment

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MAP NEEDS TO BE SCANNED.